

WASHINGTON. D.C. – House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA) sent a letter today to Education Secretary Arne Duncan questioning the timing of a study evaluating the District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) which revealed that participants in the program outperformed those not in the program with regard to reading tests and other key measurements.

“Prior to the release of the OSP evaluation, the Omnibus Spending Bill was passed by Congress and signed by the President on March 11, 2009. The bill contained a thinly disguised “poison pill” which had the effect of terminating the OSP, threatening to force those students with these scholarships back into dangerous, academically-underperforming schools, and preventing others from being offered such scholarships in the future,” Issa wrote. “I am puzzled by the timing of the release of the positive OSP evaluation; just three weeks after Congress de facto killed the program on March 11. It is highly possible that Congress might not have terminated the OSP if my colleagues, not to mention the White House, had known that this positive evaluation was about to be issued.”

Issa notes that Oversight Committee Republicans have received credible information that DOE officials were aware of the positive report but kept quiet until after Congress had acted to kill the program. The letter asks Sec. Duncan to provide a response to key questions by May 13th before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs is scheduled to hold a hearing on the OSP.

Specifically, Issa asks the Secretary to provide the following:

1. A timeline concerning the completion of the IES report, including the dates and names of those individuals in the Department who were given drafts of the report or provided with the data contained in the report.

2. All records of communications within the Department, with the White House, Congress, or the District of Columbia officials referring or relating to the public release of the IES report.

3. All records of communications between the Department and any non-governmental entity or individual referring or relating to the public release of the IES report.

[The full text of letter is available here](#) .